



## **Maricopa County**

### **News Release**

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## **County-wide Mobile Food Special Enforcement Yields 28 Un-permitted and 45 Illegal Vendors**

PHOENIX – Fifty-one Environmental Health inspectors from Maricopa County Environmental Services Department hit the streets Friday, April 4 in the first-ever countywide mobile food special enforcement. The goal of this effort was to inspect as many mobile food (large trucks), pushcart (hot dog carts) and food peddler (ice cream) vendors as possible to ensure that each had a permit and was in compliance with that permit.

“Currently we have 5 inspectors responsible for inspecting mobile food units, pushcarts and food peddlers in all of Maricopa County,” said David Ludwig, Environmental Health Division Manager. “By pulling together 51 of our inspectors at one time, we were able to inspect more vendors in one day than we normally can do in many weeks.”

The county inspects food establishments and vendors to protect public health. Food sold on the street that has not been permitted by the county can potentially lead to a foodborne illness. If an illness does occur and the food was purchased out of an un-permitted cart, it is very difficult for the county to find the root cause of the illness.

“We clearly have many good vendors on our streets following the rules,” said Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox. “But it is important that all our mobile food vendors are in compliance both to protect the public’s health and to create a level playing field between the vendors.”

All mobile food vendors are required to have their permit in a place visible to the public.

“If you can’t see the permit, you have a right to ask the vendor if he or she has been permitted by the county. We recommend that residents only buy food from vendors who clearly have gotten the proper permit,” Ludwig added.

Since the extra enforcement effort, the Mobile Food office has experienced a 5-fold increase in the number of vendors coming in for permits.

“From the amount of vendors we have seen at our offices in the last week, it looks like the word is out that the county is serious about its permit policy,” said Ludwig.

Along with having a food handler card, vendors are required to renew their mobile food permit annually. The cost for this permit varies depending on the type of vendor: mobile food vendors are \$175 per year, pushcarts are \$105 per year and food peddlers are \$120 per year.

Maximum fines for mobile food vendors conducting business without having a permit range from up to \$750 per day for an individual (or \$5,000 for an enterprise) all the way up to \$10,000.

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Following are results from the 193 mobile food, pushcart and food peddler inspections:

Permitted units: 120

Un-permitted units: 28

Illegal food peddlers (would not qualify for a permit under any condition): 45

Total lbs. of food condemned: 2072

Total permits issued in the field: 19

Citations issued: 14

Immediate permit suspensions: 12

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